The Member was of opinion that additional revenue could be raised by increasing the duty on imports and revising the terms of the Interportal Trade Convention. He hoped that the conditions of the Convention would undergo modification when the Cochin Harbour Scheme was completed. The income from the minor produce of forests could be further increased and it would be advisable to appoint a committee to study the nature, quantity, utility, etc., of such produce. Succession duties to be paid by heirs inheriting large estates might be introduced with advantage. A light fee might be levied for imparting primary education, the poor being given free scholarships.

He then advocated the adoption by the Government of the system of raising loans for meeting the expenditure involved in reproductive works of enduring utility.

Referring to the abkari revenue, the Member said that the Government should be glad to see it decreasing and that the temperance movement paved the way for the health and wealth of the people, giving stimulus to agriculture, commerce and industry. Government should, therefore, seek to develop other sources of revenue. Any tax on the agriculturists after resettlement should be avoided. The income-tax, which, in his opinion, was the only equitable tax, might, however, be gradually increased.

In regard to co-operation, he said that, in the Punjab, membership and working capital had increased by 50 per cent. within the past two years, that the Government had given 100 acres of land to the Land Mortgage Bank, that the land-owners secured loans from that bank on small rates of interest, that Arbitration Societies and Societies working for the consolidation of small holdings had been established, and that those were reforms which could be well adopted by the Travancore Government.

Turning to the question of retrenchment, the Member observed that the policy should be to increase the pay of officers and exact more work from them. He advocated the appointment of a Retrenchment Committee to eliminate all unnecessary offices, etc.

More money should be spent on the Departments of Agriculture, Industry and Co-operation. Primary education should be handed over to local authorities. Closer scrutiny should be exercised as regards the expenditure under travelling allowances, stationery, annual repairs, etc. Certain posts, he said, carried a higher pay than necessary and the best way of preventing the rush for public service was to reduce the emoluments of the services. The system of giving allowances to Government officers for discharging slight additional duties should be stopped. Grants to Municipalities should be gradually cut down. The age of retirement of officers might be raised with a view to reduce the pension charges. The number of Divisions and taluks was capable of further reduction. There was scope for reduction in the number of higher offices in the Department of Public Works as well as in the amount of travelling allowance paid to Police officers. The post of Assistant Tahsildars might be abolished with advantage, as those officers had not given satisfaction either to the Government or the public.

Dewan's reply.—You have spoken about several matters without giving me previous notice. Government will consider all your suggestions.

4. A fair, equitable and efficient administration of the State Finance.

Mr. Krishna Pillai Govinda Pillai (Member, Kottayam Taluk) said that he was grateful to the Government for the assurance given that they had no idea of imposing any additional tax at present. He urged a revision of the terms of the Interportal Trade Convention, as was done by Mr. Banerji in Cochin, as that would bring in more revenue to the State. Further, the introduction of a light *kuttikkanam*, to be realised in easy instalments, on all royal trees of a definite girth standing on private holdings, and giving the holder of the land full right over the trees, as in the Malabar District, would be a means of increasing the revenues of the State while at the same time redressing the grievances of land owners on account of the interference

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of the subordinates of the Forest Department. The Member referred to his former representation on the subject in 1096 and to the reply given by the Dewan then, and submitted that, as the principle of his suggestion had been accepted, it was not wise to postpone the arrangement till the resettlement. He then suggested the appointment of a party, like the Puduval Survey Party, to assess royal trees standing on private holdings.

The Member was of opinion that the loss of 3 lakhs of *maunds* of salt in Tamaracolam on account of the recent cyclone could have been averted, had the authorities arranged for the removal of the salt in time for sale, that it was regrettable that the authorities seemed to favour the importation of Bombay and Tuticorin salt, and that every endeavour should be made for the local production of the whole quantity of salt required for consumption in the State.

Referring to the abkari revenue, the Member said that the fall in that item of revenue might be made good if rewards were offered to private individuals for detecting cases of illicit tapping and clandestine sale of toddy and arrack.

Turning to the administration of justice, the Member said that it would be advantageous to have one more judge in the High Court for the proper and prompt inspection of the lower courts and for the improvement of the tone of those courts. He stated that Government should endeavour, in the permanent interests of the country, to reduce litigation, and that, as a step in that direction, they should themselves try to have Government cases decided out of court. He expressed surprise that, in spite of the several law officers and other revenue officers, Government were parties in many suits, and that in most of them they were losers. He suggested that, in order to reduce litigation in civil courts, the Village Panchayat Regulation should be made applicable to rural areas also.

The Member then pointed out the hardship caused by the revenue authorities in the collection of land revenue and in the issue of several demand notices in advance of the due date to one and the same *pattadar* as regards the several properties held by him.

As regards the Registration Department, the Member observed that the amount realised on the registration of documents at the residence of parties was not shown separately in the accounts, and pointed out that, with a slight change in the rules calculated to afford greater facilities to the registration of documents in the residence of parties, the receipts under that head might be increased.

Lastly, he said that it was gratifying to see that private gentlemen were to be associated in the management of minor and petty Devaswoms and urged the creation of Devaswom Boards or Councils on a statutory basis, consisting of members elected from the Hindu population of the localities concerned, for the management and restoration of those institutions.

Dewan's reply.—You have dealt with certain specific points and I shall try to answer them.

You have pointed out that Mr. Banerji, when he was the Dewan of Cochin, was able to effect some revision of the Interportal Trade Convention. So far as I have been able to see, there has been no such modification, but the question of the Interportal Trade Convention and the relationship as between the Governments of Travancore, Cochin and British India in regard to it are now engaging the attention of those Governments.

You have next referred to the present system of issuing demand notices in the case of land revenue collections in advance of the due date and of charging a fee of 4 chs. on every such notice. I agree that it is unjustifiable to levy a fine like hat until the time fixed for the payment of the assessment has actually lapsed. The Taluk officers must fix the last date for the payment of the tax and must see that the kist comes in by that date, and demand notices should be served only to those *pattadars* who fail to pay tax on the fixed date. Apparently, these demand notices are issued automatically. I shall examine the matter.

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You have urged the desirability of the rights of Government in the case of royal trees standing on *patta* lands and in that connection you have also referred to the reply I gave to a similar representation at the last session of the Assembly. As I then said, the principle of parting with the Government's right and making it over to the owners of lands on some understanding is good; but there will be very great difficulty in carrying it out in practice. I wish, however, to re-examine the question with the help of the present Conservator of Forests and see what can be done. There is a committee now engaged in examining the question as to how the difficulties now experienced in the transport of timber from private lands can be minimised. I shall see if this question also cannot be referred to that committee for examination.

In regard to the loss of 3 lakhs of *maunds* of salt in the recent cyclone, you say that you are unable to understand how there was such a large quantity in the salt pans, and you have enquired why, if we could get three lakhs of *maunds* of salt from Tamaracolam alone, we were not in a position to supply all the salt needed for Travancore entirely from our own *alloms*. As you know, it has been the policy of Government to encourage the manufacture of local salt, and various measures have been adopted to improve these *alloms* with a view to increase the output from them. But even then we cannot secure all the salt that we want. The State wants about 10 lakhs of *maunds* of salt every year and our *alloms* are not capable of producing all this salt. The salt that was recently destroyed by the storm was salt that had to be stored and kept for some time before it became fit for consumption.

Again, you have suggested that people should be given rewards for detecting cases of illicit tapping. There is a certain amount of danger in giving such rewards. It might give room to many false cases of illicit tapping being brought up against innocent persons. Nothing will be more easy for a man who has a spite against another than to bring up a false case of illicit tapping. The Departments of Excise and Police are doing their work under supervision and they have to conform to certain rules in the matter of detection of cases. They have to prepare a *mahazar* and get the testimony of two or three local people. These safeguards are necessary to protect innocent persons from malicious prosecutions. If this aspect of the question is considered, I expect you will agree that your suggestion is a dangerous one to adopt.

Then you spoke about the appointment of an additional High Court Judge for the inspection of subordinate courts. This object will be achieved when the High Court Regulation is amended by the Legislative Council on the lines already suggested by the Government.

You have said that litigation to which the Government is a party is increasing. My impression is that it is decreasing. I agree that, whenever litigation could be avoided, Government should not take their cases to the law courts and similarly they should not plead as defendants in cases which could be settled amicably. I may assure you that we are making every effort to reduce litigation to which Government is a party. Your suggestion that Village Panchayat Courts should be established with a view to reduce litigation has already been anticipated by Government. The Village Panchayat Bill published in the Gazette proposes to entrust the members of the Panchayat Courts to be established under that statute with certain judicial functions also, and if the Bill is passed by the Legislative Council and becomes law, local tribunals will be established at various centres and this will contribute to the reduction of files in civil courts.

In regard to registration revenue, you wish to know the income derived from the registration of documents at the residence of parties. I find that it is published at page 12 of the appendix portion of the Administration Report for 1097. Government will consider your suggestion in regard to the creation of Boards or Councils for the administration of Devaswoms and for the carrying out of petty construction and repairs to those institutions.

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